SFX PRESENTS

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

THE TOP 50 GREATEST SF PIONEERS EVER!

THEY SHAPED SCIENCE FICTION AS WE KNOW IT!

GEORGE LUCAS ★ STEVEN SPIELBERG ★ STAN LEE ★ GERRY ANDERSON ★ JOSS WHEDON
TIM BURTON ★ HR GIGER ★ DOUGLAS ADAMS ★ PETER JACKSON ★ STANLEY KUBRICK

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We salute you!

SFX celebrates the achievement of the 50 men and women who have done most to shape the SF and fantasy landscape into what it is today.

And, yeah, we're waiting for the "Where was Bob Block, creator of *Rentaghost* in your list?" letters...

Let's start by getting clear what this Top 50 isn't. It isn't a list of the richest, powerful or most successful people in SF and fantasy. You can be successful and rich without necessarily producing anything worthwhile, as Westlife prove with every single they unleash on a poor, unsuspecting public.

This is a list of the most influential SF and fantasy pioneers of the past 150 years. If you removed any of these guys from the timeline so that they never existed then the current state of SF would be very different indeed, almost certainly for the worse.

These are the guys who took risks, gave us startling new innovations or simply affected us so deeply on a mass cultural level that the landscape of science fiction and fantasy was changed forever. They are the trailblazers who set new standards. They are the dreamers with whom we're all too happy to share the dream. They're the reason why SFX was launched in the first place, nearly ten years ago now; between them they have created a genre which is now the most popular, far-reaching and all-encompassing genre on the planet: best-selling books, blockbuster films, TV ratings successes, and even the computer games industry prove the mighty pulling power of SF and fantasy in the entertainment industry.

So why did we choose who we chose? Why did we leave out who we left out? There were, you will not be surprised to learn, a lot of arguments, a lot of appeals to outside experts, and numerous redrafts of the final list. Initially, there were a few actors in the list (Harrison Ford, Sigourney Weaver, Tom Baker) but we finally decided their contribution seemed to be on a different playing field to the creators (and besides which, we had a Top 100 Greatest Characters poll only a couple of years back, so they've had their time in the spotlight).

It was a painstaking experience, and we have to extend our heartfelt thanks to Jason Arnopp, who tirelessly listened to our many amendments and last minute changes in order to nail the final 50, and then wrote all the text in this supplement (apart from this bit*)... Maybe he should be in the Top 50?

* There's a special no-prize for anyone who can work out which member of the *SFX* team did write this overly sentimental tosh... email your suggestions to sfx@futurenet.co.uk

CLOSE, BUT NO SONIC SCREWDRIVER...

Who are the SF luminaries who didn't quite make it into the *SFX* Top 50? Well, we reckon this lot have staked their claims to greatness...

Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill 2.*

Terry Gilliam's Python pals.

Paul Verhoeven's *Total Recall.*

Dominic Monaghan is lost in, er, JJ Abrams' *Lost.*

James O'Barr

(1960–present)

Blessed us with supernatural hero The Crow on paper and celluloid.

Frank Miller

(1957–present)

Rejuvenated DC Comics in 1986 with *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns.*

John Williams

(1932–present)

Composer extraordinaire for various Spielberg and Lucas blockbusters.

Quentin Tarantino

(1963–present)

Reinvented plot structure and made cinematic blood-letting fashionable.

Delia Derbyshire

(1937–2001)

Composed *Doctor Who*'s eternally spine-shivering theme music.

Terry Gilliam

(1940–present)

Genius behind some of the maddest fantasy flicks ever.

Paul Verhoeven

(1938–present)

Directed some of the toughest SF movies in history.

Irwin Allen

(1916–1991)

Small screen SF merchant behind *Lost In Space* and *The Time Tunnel.*

David Cronenberg

(1943–present)

Bespectacled pioneer of "body horror".

Albert R Broccoli

(1909–1996)

Produced Ian Fleming's James Bond books for the silver screen. Had a brilliant surname.

JJ Abrams

(1966–present)

Alias never went further than cultdom, but *Lost* could propel him into the big league if it maintains the brilliance of its first few episodes.

50 Mary Shelley

(1797–1851) WHO? Frankenstein's monster's mother.

Why?
Not every incredibly influential person is aware of what they're doing. An 18-year-old Mary Shelley wrote her 1818 novel *Frankenstein* as part of a private contest between friends. In creating Frankenstein's monster, that classic walking hodge-podge of dead body parts, she effectively gave the world its first zombie. She also birthed a noble tradition of mad movie scientists with God complexes and handed Mel Brooks a vehicle to make us laugh like drains with 1974's *Young Frankenstein*. Shelley's adult life was cruelly anything but a chuckle: she lost two children and contracted smallpox in 1828, leaving her with permanent facial scars. Where's the justice?

Finest Moment:
Living on through the 20th Century and beyond, courtesy of a succession of *Frankenstein* movies. The first was Thomas Edison's primitive enactment in 1910.

Did you know?
Shelley didn't invent the tradition of the monster being reanimated by lightning. In fact, her sly old fox of a mad scientist refused to say how he did it.

Hollywood's take on the creature...

49 George A Romero

(1940 – present) WHO? Don of the dead

Why?
His directorial and co-writing debut *Night Of The Living Dead* (1968) ranks among the best ever uses of $100,000. It established stiffs as viable fear figures *and* made the point that racism was even more terrifying than being eaten alive. Romero subsequently formed a loose partnership with the similarly influential FX artist Tom Savini, gladly providing platforms for the man's gory magic. *Dawn Of The Dead* (1978) hurled gallons of blood around while demonstrating horror's ability to satirise. Then 1985's *Day Of The Dead* completed Romero's zombie trilogy in a claustrophobic style necessitated by the man's dwindling budgets. Following *Dawn Of The Dead*'s successful 2004 remake, he's finally been able to shoot his long-mooted *Land Of The Dead*.

Finest Moment:
In terms of absolute seminal clout, *Night Of The Living Dead* takes the maggot-riddled biscuit.

Did you know?
Romero had an uncredited cameo in *Silence Of The Lambs* as an FBI agent. God only knows why.

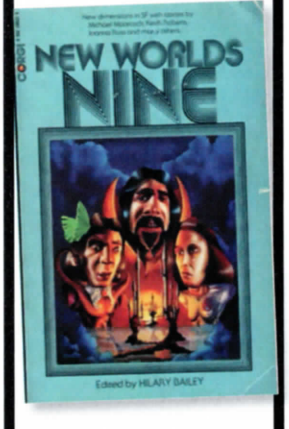
48 Michael Moorcock

(1939–present)
WHO? Editor of *New Worlds* magazine.

Why?
This Londoner's position as the anti-Tolkien was established with his immensely popular character called Elric, designed to pervert the clichés found in Middle-earth-inspired fantasy novels. In 1964 he became editor of *New Worlds*, a traditional SF magazine which he promptly changed beyond recognition. The monthly may as well have been retitled New Wave, as it signalled a sea change in SF while showcasing '60s alternative culture. The genre ventured boldly beyond the regular galaxy into cyberspace - or the multiverse, as seen in some of Moorcock's 50-plus novels. Besides being a damn fine read, *New Worlds* also helped forge SF a newfound literary respectability

Finest Moment:
Deciding to take the job at *New Worlds* when he could have "just" gone on to become a great writer.

Did you know?
An attempt to bring his Stormbringer novels to the screen, in an animated form, was abandoned because (a) the work involved was immense and (b) Moorcock showed "limited enthusiasm".



47 Ray Harryhausen

(1920–present)
WHO? Pre-CGI monster-maker.

Why?
He's the special effects man who introduced split-screen techniques and stop-motion animation to the world. Frustrated by films he saw as a kid, which talked about monsters but never showed them to audiences, the LA-born Harryhausen was determined to deliver the goods in his pictures. Starting off as animator Willis O'Brien's assistant on *Mighty Joe Young* (1949), he went on to spread his wings as an FX god in his own right, working on filmed stories by Jules Verne and HG Wells.

Finest Moment:
Jason And The Argonauts (1963). Who could forget those fiercely animated skeletons born from the Hydra's teeth? It remains effective today because of Harryhausen's painstaking care for his work.

Did you know?
An octopus in 1955's *It Came From Beneath The Sea* only had six legs. This was nothing to do with budget, insisted Harryhausen: he cut off the other two to simplify the animation. Fiendish.

One of Ray's finest moments.

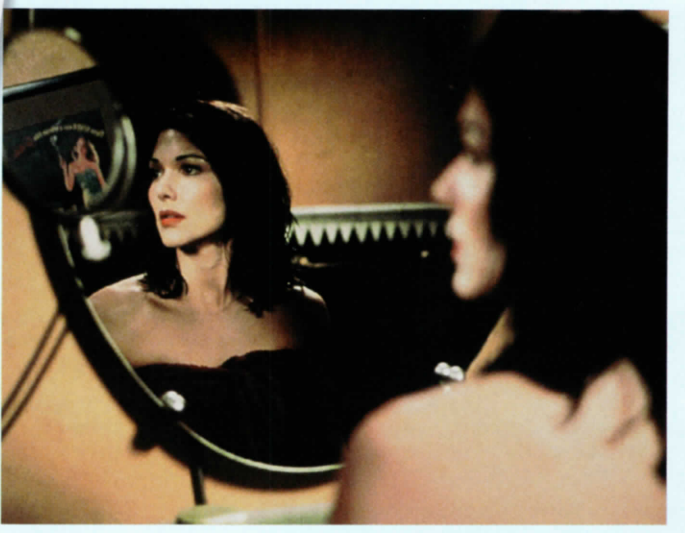
46 David Lynch

(1946–present) WHO? The sultan of strange.

Why?
The modern film world would be a mightily duller place without this Missouri native's cinematic madness. After leaving behind an army of traumatised acid-heads with *Eraserhead* (1977), Lynch attempted relatively mainstream work with *The Elephant Man* (1980) and *Dune* (1984). Then he returned to what he does best: weird shit in smalltown America. 1986's *Blue Velvet* set a new benchmark not only for weirdness, but scary psychopaths, Dennis Hopper's electrifying portrayal of Frank Booth entering the history books. By *Lost Highway* (1997) and *Mulholland Drive* (2001), Lynch was tearing sensible narrative structure a new asshole. If the man's direct influence on other film-makers has been comparatively limited, it's only because most of them haven't got the foggiest idea how to replicate him.

Finest Moment:
Twin Peaks, his ground-breakingly sinister 1990 TV series.

Did you know?
Lynch reportedly snubbed George Lucas's offer to direct *Return Of The Jedi*. Picture it: Ewoks in lipstick, swaying around in strobe lighting against red curtains...



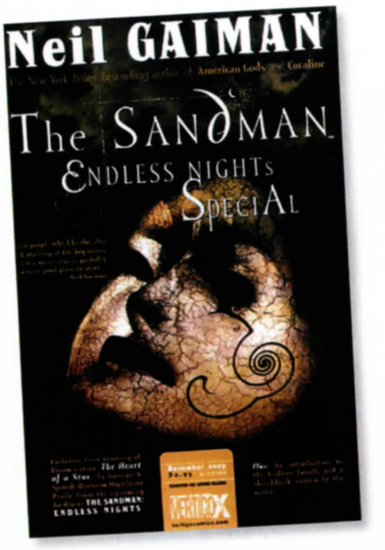
45 Neil Gaiman

(1960–present)
WHO? Comic book writer and novelist.

Why?
It's a measure of the Portchester-born Gaiman's calibre that he was the only scriptwriter in the last three seasons of *Babylon 5* whose name wasn't Straczynski. These days he's a unique, visionary novelist, but the '90s saw him win endless awards for *Sandman*, DC Comics' cult monthly graphic novel. Its 75-issue run spawned the foxily morbid character Death, whose incredibly popular appearances were wisely kept to a minimum and only spun off into two graphic novels, making her a true underground icon. Gaiman also spawned the early '90s graphic novel *Books Of Magic*, about a speccy young wizard. Ring any bells? Uh, let's not even go there...

Finest Moment:
For establishing that comic books could be intellectual, it has to be *Sandman*.

Did you know?
Gaiman is a *Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy* nut: one of his first published books was *Don't Panic*, a companion to the series.



The Sandman: comic book greatness.

44 Fritz Lang

(1890–1976) WHO? Expressionist miracle-worker.

Why?
Had you been sitting in a German cinema in 1927 watching *Metropolis* (let's not be presumptuous here: perhaps you *did*, you old coot), your lower jaw would have hit your popcorn. Over the years, Lang's monochrome delight has lost some of its footage and been restored in various versions (including, incredibly, a colourised travesty), but thankfully remains eye candy to be reckoned with. The look is all gorgeous gothic and art deco, with the kind of special effects which really shouldn't have been possible in the early 20th Century, let alone employed to depict forward-thinking concepts like picture phones which even in the 21st Century are still in their infancy.

Finest Moment:
That'll be *Metropolis*.

Did you know?
1933 saw the Vienna-born Lang smuggle himself from Berlin to Paris, when the former's Nazi regime took exception to his crime drama of that year, *Das Testament Des Doctor Mabuse*. Thank God he didn't show them his little-known short, *Adolf Ist Eine Dummkopf*.

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43 Pat Mills

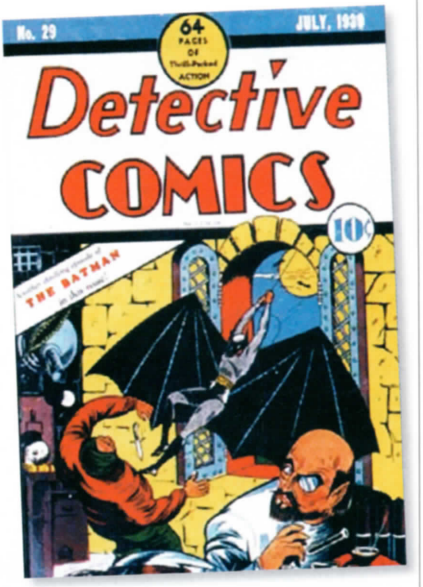
(Age? – He wouldn't say!)
WHO? Prime mover behind launch of *2000 AD*.

Why?
The 1950s launched *The Eagle*; the '60s spawned *TV21*. The following decade saw the rise of *2000 AD*, which took the SF comic book to whole new levels of bad attitude, with more than a bit of the old ultra-violence. Mirroring the energy and bile of the punk rock revolution which was taking Britain by storm, Commissioning Editor Mills and co led the way for a new generation of cynical comic book carnage. Writers like John Wagner and Alan Moore and illustrators like Dave Gibbons and Mike McMahon laid rock-solid foundations. While various similarly-targeted British comics have fallen by the wayside, *2000 AD* has long outlived its titular sell-by date.

Finest Moment:
Judge Dredd, one of the few world-renowned British SF comic strip characters.

Did you know?
The design of Dredd was based on John Carradine's appearance in the 1975 movie *Death Race 2000*.

2000 AD's notorious Dredd.



42 Bob Kane

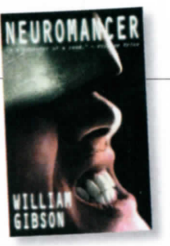
(1915–1998)
WHO? Batman's principal creator.

Why?
Twenty-two-year-old artist Kane invented Batman in May 1939, with advice from fellow sketcher Bill Finger. National Comics had approached Kane to create a new superhero to sit on their roster alongside the already-established Superman. Kane and Finger's soon-to-be-iconic Batman combined the dark enigma of 1930s pulp hero The Shadow, Zorro's double-life, the literally batty qualities of Count Dracula and Leonardo da Vinci's designs for a one-man flying machine.

Kane and Finger eventually fell out when Kane took to claiming that he alone invented the Caped Crusader, leaving Finger without a ha'penny. But hey: this isn't the Top 50 Swell Guys list.

Finest Moment:
Inventing Batman in the first place. It sure wasn't creating the TV cartoon characters Courageous Cat or even Cool McCool...

Did you know?
Kane's artwork made a cameo appearance on a newspaper in the first *Batman* movie, on which he also received a Project Consultant credit.



41 William Gibson

(1948–present) WHO? The father of cyberpunk.

The lowdown:
Influenced in turn by the works of mid-century "beat poets" William S Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, Gibson began to write in earnest in 1977. Still traumatised by the relatively early deaths of his parents, the South Carolina-born genius drew on both his early SF leanings and the twin births of punk in New York and London, to create a wildly imaginative and pessimistic view of future technology. He anticipated the internet and virtual reality when they were the stuff of a madman's dreams. We'll ignore the fact that Gibson wrote the script for Keanu Reeves' *Johnny Mnemonic* and concentrate instead on the two fine *X-Files* episodes ("Kill Switch" and "First Person Shooter") he penned and his ripe teat of ideas on which so many science fiction writers have suckled.

Finest Moment:
His 1984 novel Neuromancer which coined the term "cyberspace".

Did you know?
One tireless myth about Gibson is that he writes on a manual typewriter. He used to, but stopped in 1985.

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40 Jules Verne

(1828–1905) WHO? SF's great grandpa.

Why?
Contrary to his dad's hope that he'd be a lawyer, the French writer prolifically issued plays and novels which included mention of things yet to be invented. The world had never seen the like: titles like *Journey To The Center Of The Earth* (1864) and *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea* (1870) must have blown the public's tophats clean off. Yet strictly speaking, Verne seemed to be even more into science than fiction. He once criticised HG Wells for writing about a non-existent substance called cavourite, for instance. Still, as he was very rich and sailing around the world in a yacht, Jules Verne could say whatever he liked.

Finest Moment:
In terms of household-name popularity? *Around The World In Eighty Days* (1873). In terms of fun? *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea*, me hearties.

Did you know?
In 1886, Verne was shot in the shin by his nephew after the pair of them struggled with a gun.

39 Ridley Scott

(1937–present)
WHO? Director of *Alien* and *Blade Runner*.

Why?
Directors with a background in shooting TV commercials are often considered shallow and soulless when it comes to film. Ridley Scott is the exception that proves the rule. With 1979's *Alien*, he not only kick-started a movie franchise, but raised the bar in SF visuals. His scenes were lavish and strangely beautiful, yet disturbing. Five years later, the futuristic LA of his *Blade Runner* practically cemented the world's vision of decades to come, spawning all manner of cyberpunk visions. Scott never returned to SF: perhaps because there was no way he could top what he had already achieved. He did, however, start the craze for Director's Cuts in 1993, when he issued his definitive cut of *Blade Runner*.

Finest Moment:
That astounding *Blade Runner* rain-drenched and neon cityscape.

Did you know?
In 1963, Scott passed an opportunity to design the Daleks on to fellow BBC employee Raymond P Cusick.

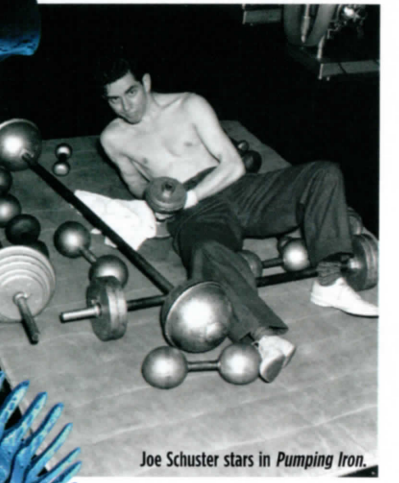
38 Jerry Siegel & Joe Shuster

Jerry Siegel (1914–1996)
Joe Shuster (1914–1992)
WHO? Inventors of Superman.

Why?
As Cleveland teens, the pair conceived of their Man Of Steel in the early '30s, wanting to lift the American public out of their Great Depression. Superman first appeared in 1933 in the pages of *Science Fiction* comic, drawn by Shuster and scripted by Siegel. Years later, courtesy of National Periodicals (to become DC), Superman got his own eponymous comic book, which aptly flew off the stands. Yet the Krypton kid's creators felt sidelined as a horde of spin-offs seemingly made money for anyone but them. It took a remarkable four decades for Siegel and Shuster to finally claim some of what they were owed.

Finest Moment:
Oh, we think prompting the superhero genre should do it.

Did you know?
Hitler indirectly sculpted Superman. Siegel and Shuster originally planned Superman as an evil mastermind, inspired by the German philosopher Nietzsche. When Hitler misused Nietzsche's writings, the duo turned Superman's persona 180 degrees.


Joe Schuster stars in *Pumping Iron*.

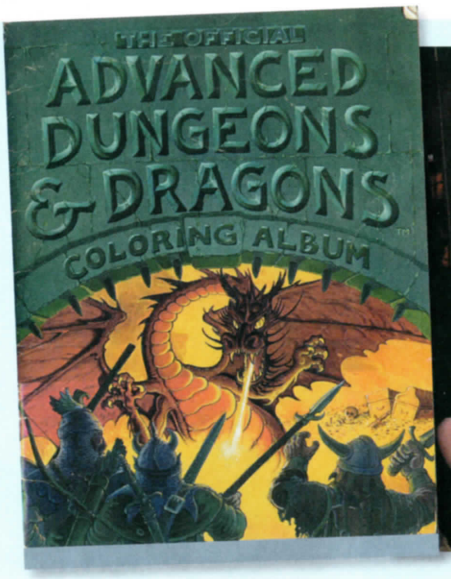
37 Gary Gygax

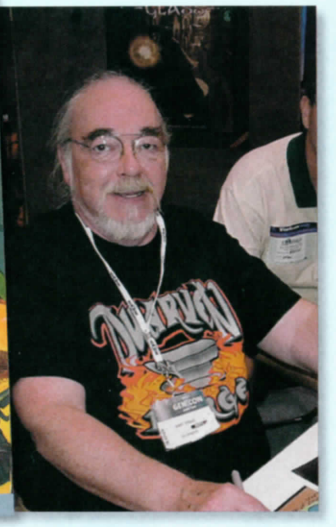
(1938–present) WHO? Role-play guru.

Why?
Roll 2d6, multiply it by ten million and you'll have the number of adolescent lives which have been enriched by Gary Gygax's handiwork – and the number of people beaten up for being "nerdy twats". When it emerged in 1974, Dungeons & Dragons must have bewildered many a traditional board-gamer. There was no final square here; no finite end. The rulebook was simply a loose template for the imagination of the players and their abiding Dungeon Master. Some bailed out when Advanced Dungeons & Dragons came along in 1979 and sorted the anally-retentive men from the boys, but the change in the world's axis had been made. Thinking was now encouraged, even if it meant you didn't get laid.

Finest Moment:
The Gelatinous Cube, which slithered around with the bones of its victims visibly hanging inside it. We like the Gelatinous Cube.

Did you know?
Gygax's present-day interests include "bird-watching, fishing, walking and pyrotechnics". Okay there, Gaz...





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36 Bram Stoker

(1847 – 1912)

WHO? Count Dracula's old man.

Why?
Without Stoker, we wouldn't have Dracula, making life significantly less fun (even if it *would* mean that the movie *Van Helsing* never existed). The Dublin-born Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula* gave the pesky neck-biters an enduring figurehead. According to who you believe, Stoker based the character on (a) Romania's Vlad The Impaler, (b) blood-guzzler Elizabeth Bathory, or (c) his favourite brand of toothpaste. Clue: it's definitely not (c).

Finest Moment:
Jonathan Harker's account of tea with Count Dracula. "There seemed a strange stillness over everything. But as I listened, I heard as if from down below in the valley the howling of many wolves. The Count's eyes gleamed, and he said, 'Listen to them, the children of the night. What music they make!'."

Did you know?
We gave Stoker's *Dracula* novel away for free with our own *Horror Special* magazine last year. We're good like that.

35 Stephen King

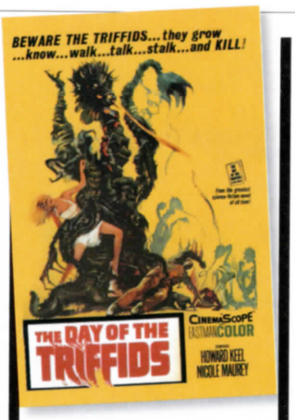
(1947–present) WHO? A great American story-teller.

Why?
The mind boggles at the sheer volume of stories King has brought to the world: the nightmares induced, the stomachs turned. His influence is all-pervading, from the hardcore horror of *Pet Sematary* to the mainstream heights of his critic-swaying film adaptations like *The Green Mile* (1999) and especially *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994).

While King's energised writing is hardly simplistic, the fact that he doesn't write impenetrable literary candyfloss has helped encourage prospective authors. He is one of the few writers to have dished out plain-talkin' wisdom in his excellent turn-of-the-millennium book, *On Writing*. He is currently talking about retiring (he was seriously injured when hit by a van in 1999), but we can't see that happening.

Finest Moment:
Kingdom Hospital. Don't worry, just kidding there, folks. *The Shining*, for sheer spine-tingling horror.

Did you know?
King might never have settled on a career as an author, had his wife Tabitha not rescued pages of his abandoned short story *Carrie* from the bin in 1972. The eventual novel sold for $400,000.



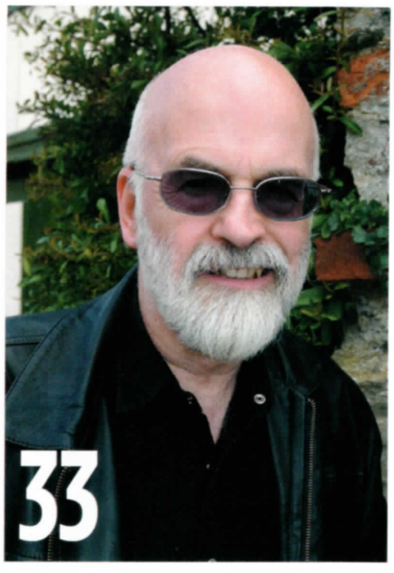
34 John Wyndham

(1903–1969)
WHO? Classic British SF writer.

Why?
Let's cut to the chase: Wyndham gave us one of the scariest monsters of all time. Triffids were not only entirely alien-looking – being huge, slithering tulip-esque plants – but they didn't even have the good grace to conclusively end your misery. They simply lashed out with a whip-like tongue and blinded you. Bastards. Wyndham wrote 1951's *Day Of The Triffids*, his most successful SF novel, while in his forties, having held varied jobs in farming, law and advertising. Clearly, his true vocation was writing bleaker-than-bleak fiction, capturing the mood of a post-WW2 Britain. He popularised speculative fiction: rather than dazzling the reader with spaceships in the distant future, Wyndham's SF scared them silly with "what if" tales based in the present social climate.

Finest Moment:
Them t'riffic Triffids. The 1981 TV series scarred many a young brain.

Did you know?
The author's full name was John Wyndham Parkes Lucas Beynon Harris. A cumbersome moniker, frankly.



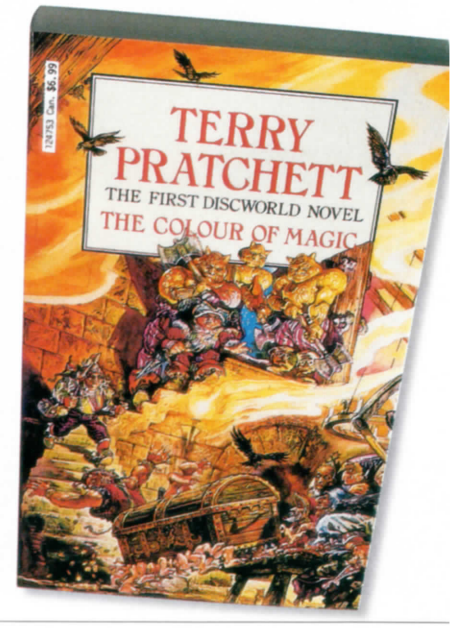
33 Terry Pratchett

(1948–present)
WHO? Creator of the Discworld novel series.

Why?
Pratchett went from being publicity officer for the Central Electricity Generator Board, uncomfortably shouldering responsibility for three nuclear power stations, to celebrated novelist in 1983, when his first Discworld novel *The Colour Of Magic* was published. His fiction is the perfect example of fantasy being humorous, while still bleeding fertile imagination from every page. It's true to say that without Pratchett's influence, fantasy might well have been in danger of taking itself too seriously. The man's mind is a one-off.

Finest Moment:
Forging the basic structure of the Discworld itself. It's a huge disc, surprisingly enough, carried on the backs of four elephants, which are in turn standing on a gigantic space turtle. Brilliant.

Did you know?
Pratchett once ditched his German publisher when it inserted an advert for soup into the *actual text* of a Discworld novel.



32 Nick Landau

(1953–present)

WHO? Main man behind Forbidden Planet stores.

Why?
When Landau opened the first modestly-sized Forbidden Planet shop in London's Denmark Street in 1978, along with Mike Lake, the pair had already launched Titan Distribution, which became Britain's comic distribution behemoth before being sold to US giant Diamond. Landau, with Vivian Cheung, also went on to own Titan Publishing. Forbidden Planet spread to various key British cities, eventually moving to bigger London premises on New Oxford Street, then Shaftesbury Avenue. Where would SF enthusiasts be without FP to walk around boggle-eyed, while their partners repeatedly ask if they've finished looking?

Finest Moment:
The move to 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, in September 2003. We loved the New Oxford Street shop's cluttered charm, but this took SF retail to a whole new level.

Did you know?
Landau was once Acting Editor on *2000 AD* and reportedly helped convince Pat Mills to return to the title. Good work.

31 JM Straczynski

(1954–present)

WHO? The man behind *Babylon 5*.

Why?
B5 was one of the SF shows which snuck the phrase "story arc" into our collective vocabularies during the mid '90s. While a show like *Star Trek* was essentially a series of self-contained narrative bubbles, Straczynski had cunningly mapped out a whole five-year plot before his series even started. Hence his famous description of *Babylon 5* as "a novel for television". Its grittiness proved to be another of the man's contributions to SF culture: this show unashamedly reflected adult life.

Finest Moment:
Not a single moment so much as the general feeling that any of *B5*'s main characters could die in any given episode. You don't get much of that to the pound.

Did you know?
Straczynski spent five years as a host on the Los Angeles SF talk radio show, *Hour 25*. No-one knows whether he plotted all his chat five years in advance.

30 Sam Raimi

(1959–present) WHO? Zombie-basher and exhumer of Spider-Man.

Why?
If there's one thing that defines Raimi's approach, besides technical flourishes and rampant in-jokery, it's the sheer energy and passion involved. Not one but two distinct film genres have trembled in his wake. First, he revised horror with *The Evil Dead* (1981). The movie's kinetic overload, black humour and splashy lo-fi gore were so mindblowing that Stephen King dubbed Raimi "the future of horror". Actually, the director turned out to be the future of *Spider-Man*, bringing the webslinger to the world's multiplexes.

Finest Moment:
A masterfully dynamic jump in *The Evil Dead*. Two characters try some mind-reading with playing cards. One of them suddenly becomes possessed, floats in the air and starts shouting.

Did you know?
Raimi's wife Gillian is the daughter of the late Lorne Greene from the original *Battlestar Galactica* series. Coooool.

29 Russell T Davies

(1963–present) WHO? The Man Who Resurrected Who.

Why?
Swansea's son was arguably the only man in the world who would have been fully trusted – either by existing fans or the BBC – to mount a post-millennial *Doctor Who* comeback in style. He's not some bloke who got lucky and doesn't appreciate the show's history. He has written envelope-prodding TV shows like *Queer As Folk* (2000) and the highly controversial fantasy drama *The Second Coming* (2003), which starred a certain Christopher Eccleston. Good God, the man was even *born* in the very year the show started. In short, Russell T Davies is the man who is about to make 2005 – and hopefully years beyond – a whole lot more fun. That power has set him up above the gods!

Finest Moment:
Casting his old mate Christopher Eccleston in that difficult lead role.

Did you know?
One of Davies' first novels was a Doctor Who New Adventure for the Virgin range, *Damaged Goods* (1996). Set on a council estate, it featured cocaine abuse – a very unusual subject for *Who*.

28 Peter Jackson

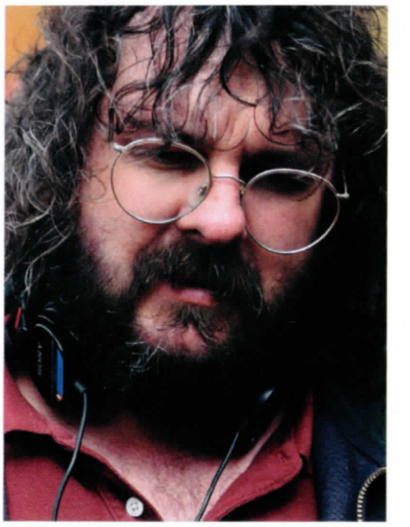
(1961–present)

WHO? Director of cinema's *Lord Of The Rings* trilogy.

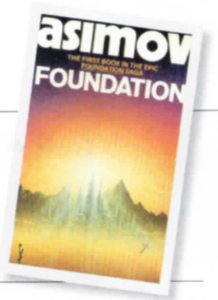
Why?
Jackson initially set new standards in comedy gore flicks in his native New Zealand, writing and directing OTT horror comedies like *Bad Taste* (1987) and *Brain Damage* (1992). Besides being incredibly violent, they worked miracles with their limited budgets and inspired countless no-budget horror directors to pick up their camcorders and go down the local butchers, requesting offal. Imagine Jackson's delight in the late '90s when New Line slung millions at him to bring Tolkien's *Lord Of The Rings* trilogy to the silver screen. This incredibly ambitious project would encompass seven years of his life. It demonstrated leaps and bounds in CGI technology, while presenting the biggest battle scenes ever staged.

Finest Moment:
Pulling off the potentially disastrous task of making his CG Gollum seem real, with help from actor Andy Serkis.

Did you know?
As a teenager, Jackson made a film called *World War Two*. Never afraid of thinking big, then.



27 Isaac Asimov

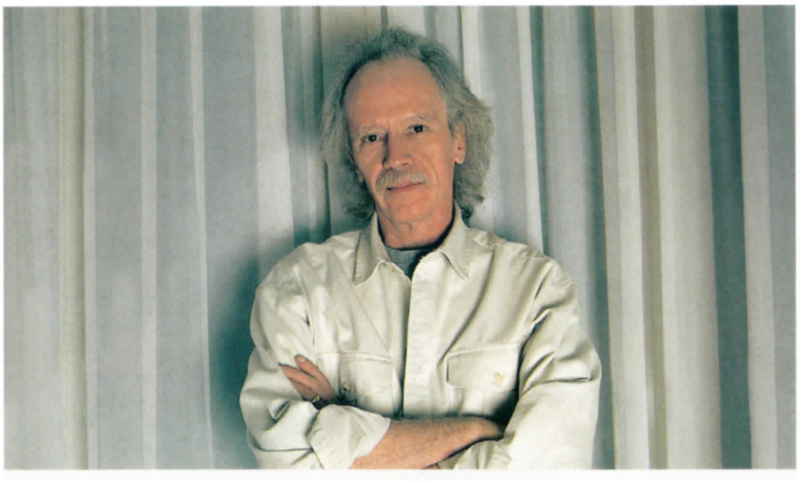


(1920–1992) WHO? SF's robotics specialist.

Why?
A Russia-born Jew who grew up suffering anti-semitism in Brooklyn, Asimov discovered SF through the magazines sold in his parents' sweet shop. By the age of 19, he was writing for those same publications, showing interest in hard science rather than wild imagination. After studying and acting as a civilian chemical researcher during WW2, he produced such visionary novels as *The Gods Themselves* (1972), *Foundation's Edge* (1982) and *Robot Dreams* (1986). Counting his non-fiction titles, he left us with an incredibly prolific 500-odd volumes some of which TV and film have mined. In the cinema, we've already seen *The Bicentennial Man* (1999) and more recently the Will Smith actioner *I, Robot*.

Finest Moment:
Establishing the Three Laws of Robotics, including the fact that robots can't harm their creators. Tell it to Taren Capel, eh?

Did you know?
Asimov was afraid of flying. Oh, the absolute irony.



26 John Carpenter

(1948-present) WHO? Horror film director extraordinaire.

Why?
Regardless of whether this maverick film-maker is now past his prime, he carved the blueprint for a thousand slasher movies with 1979's *Halloween* and gave us a gritty SF action flick in 1981's *Escape From New York*. In 1982, he received a critical carpeting for delivering perhaps the most nihilistic, grisly SF classic ever: a remake of 1951's Howard Hawks-produced *The Thing From Another World*, simply named *The Thing*. Rob Bottin's special effects were horrifyingly graphic, without so much as a pixel of CGI. More importantly, Carpenter crafted a masterclass of atmosphere and paranoia, aided by his oppressive score. Did we mention that he's a film score god, too?

Finest Moment:
Excellent misdirection in *The Thing* when a doctor's arms are bitten off by the chest of the man he's attempting to resuscitate.

Did you know?
Superstitious Carpenter won't wear a crew cap of the movie he's working on, until it's completed. The silly ol' goose.

25 JK Rowling

(1965–present)
WHO? Harry Potter's real mum.

Why?
Joanne Kathleen Rowling's story is one of those fairytale "discovered author" stories which you really didn't believe happened any more. She dreamed up the speccy boy-wizard Harry Potter in 1990 while on a delayed train between Manchester and London and wrote what became *Harry Potter & The Philosopher's Stone* over a period of five years. Count 'em. Then she became one of the richest authors in the world. Her success has produced some great movie adaptations and greatly contributed to a resurgence in the world's interest in fantasy, so everyone's happy.

Finest Moment:
The invention of Quidditch – a kind of airborne Rollerball.

Quote:
"[The seventh Harry Potter novel] will be long, because I won't want to let go. I'll just keep writing. I'll probably just start a completely new plot in book seven. It's going to be very difficult to leave it."

Did you know?
Rowling wrote her first story at the age of six. It was about a rabbit called Rabbit. Thankfully, she didn't later invent a wizard called Wizard.

THE Fantastic Four
1 NOV.
10
FEATURING: "THE THING!" "MR. FANTASTIC!" "HUMAN TORCH!" "INVISIBLE GIRL!" TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ONE MIGHTY MAGAZINE!
I--I CAN'T TURN INVISIBLE FAST ENOUGH!! HOW CAN WE STOP THIS CREATURE, TORCH?
JUST WAIT AND SEE, SISTER! THE FANTASTIC FOUR HAVE ONLY BEGUN TO FIGHT!
THE THREE OF YOU CAN'T DO IT ALONE! IT'S TIME FOR THE THING TO TAKE A HAND!
I'LL TAKE MORE THAN ROPES TO KEEP MISTER FANTASTIC OUT OF ACTION!

24 Jack Kirby

(1917–1994)
WHO? Godly comic book artist.

Why?
Kirby laid foundations for comic books – art, structure, pretty much everything – which remain steadfast today. Entering the industry shortly after its mid-'30s inception, Kirby quickly established the classic '60s pop art look, making artfully bold ink lines and muscular heroes de rigueur. He breathed life into some great heroes like Captain America and the Fantastic Four, as well as co-creating The Incredible Hulk with Marvel deity Stan Lee. A dispute with Lee led to Kirby jumping ship in 1970. Quite possibly bellowing, "I'll show those scurvy shysters!" Kirby joined Marvel's deadly rivals DC Comics, where he continued his tireless delivery of great new characters.

Finest Moment:
His most personal, imaginative stuff, for DC in the early '70s: *New Gods*, *Mister Miracle*...

Quote:
"I was given a chocolate bar and an M-1 rifle and told to go kill Hitler" – Kirby fondly reminiscing on his Army service during World War II.

Did you know?
In 1962, Kirby created 1158 pages of comic art. He was producing over half of the art for eight Marvel titles.

23 Stan Winston

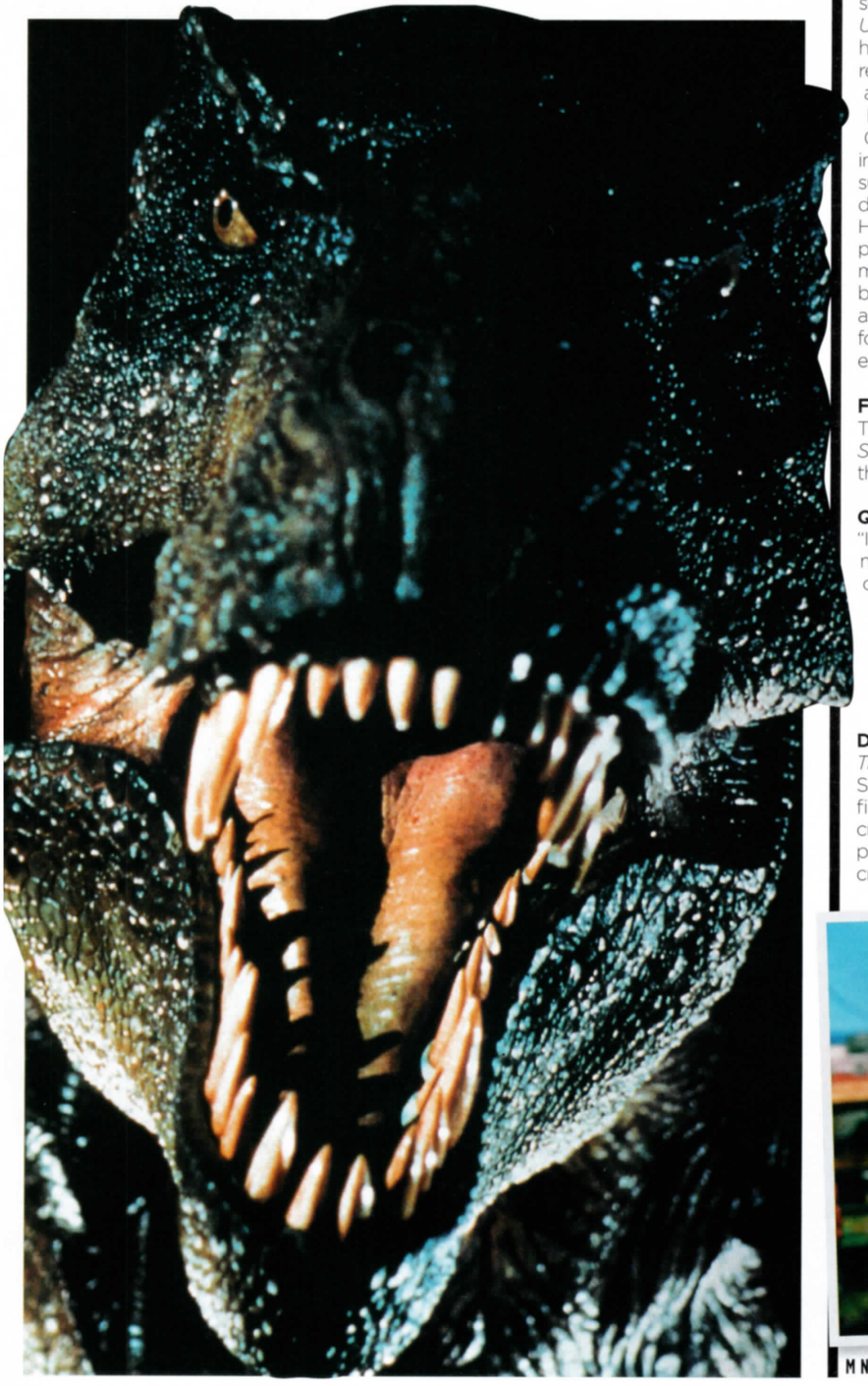
(1946–present) WHO? Special effects genius.

Why?
Winston is universally considered The Guvnor of creature features. He stepped in at the eleventh hour to redesign the titular hunter in 1987's *Predator*, for instance, which was fortunate seeing as the original resembled a cross between a one-eyed dog and a giraffe. Then there was his work in *Aliens* (1996) and *Jurassic Park* (1993). The big exception to Winston's affinity for organic monsters came with the *Terminator* films. In the first, Winston worked with a limited budget to push the boundaries of what could be done with biomechanical effects. In the second, he zapped the rulebook. His work has also distinguished many a smaller picture, such as *Dead & Buried* (1980), *The Exterminator* (1981) and *Wrong Turn* (2003).

Finest Moment:
Given the period, perhaps the Terminator performing surgery on itself. Even if it *is* difficult to watch...

Quote:
"I am not a technician. I am techno-ignorant, but I love creating characters and telling wonderful stories."

Did you know?
Winston was the second special effects man to have his own star on Hollywood Boulevard's sidewalk.



22 M Night Shyamalan

(1970 – present)
WHO? The new Hitchcock.

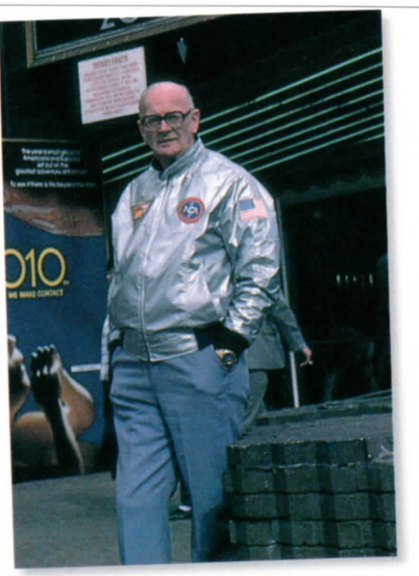
Why?
If this India-born, Philadelphia-raised auteur has placed one stamp on cinema, it's resurrecting the surprise twist. To the extent where the biggest surprise at the end of his *next* movie would be everything being as it seems. *The Sixth Sense*, *Unbreakable* and *Signs* have all brought more respectability to horror and SF, as well as giving Bruce Willis and Mel Gibson their best movies in years. We're not yet sure what *The Village* has done... Shyamalan's Hitchcock-esque habit of placing himself in his movies is unfortunate, but when they're as good as *Unbreakable* we'll forgive him his Tarantino-esque conceit.

Finest Moment:
The end of *The Sixth Sense*. We got chills, they're multiplyin'...

Quote:
"I love my stories being multi-layered, and coming at it from different angles, so that you don't understand the film's true emotional motivation until the very end."

Did you know?
The Village was Shyamalan's first major film not to feature a car crash as an important plot point. He *loves* them crazy pile-ups.

M Night searches for a new twist.



21 Arthur C Clarke

(1917–present) WHO? The science-lover's SF author.

Why?
Arthur C Clarke is one of SF's few proponents who are involved with actual science, as well as fiction. He's a very clever man indeed. By the time he was 20, he had joined the British Interplanetary Society. By 30, he was writing science fiction stories. In 1964, he collaborated with director Stanley Kubrick on a movie which was to be considered one of the all-time greatest examples of science fiction cinema, *2001: A Space Odyssey*. In the '80s, Clarke went on to produce the sequel *2010*, present two factual TV series of his own and do loads more clever things. He eventually got bored with space, turning to the sea instead.

Finest Moment:
Getting a space orbit named after him, after he invented the principles of geostationary satellite communication. Sorry, but that beats writing novels and scripts.

Quote:
"Politicians should read science fiction, not westerns and detective stories."

Did you know?
Clarke and his family were in Sri Lanka when the tragic tsunami hit in December. Thankfully, all survived.

20 Douglas Adams

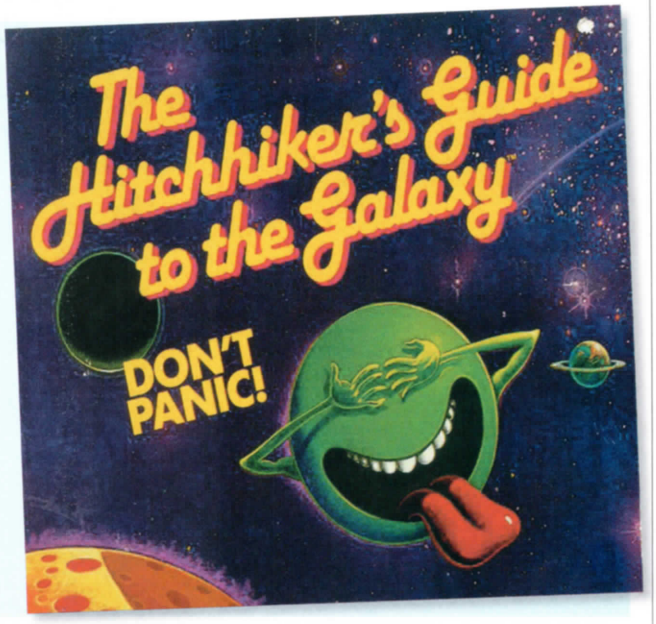
(1952 – 2001) WHO? Great British SF merchant.

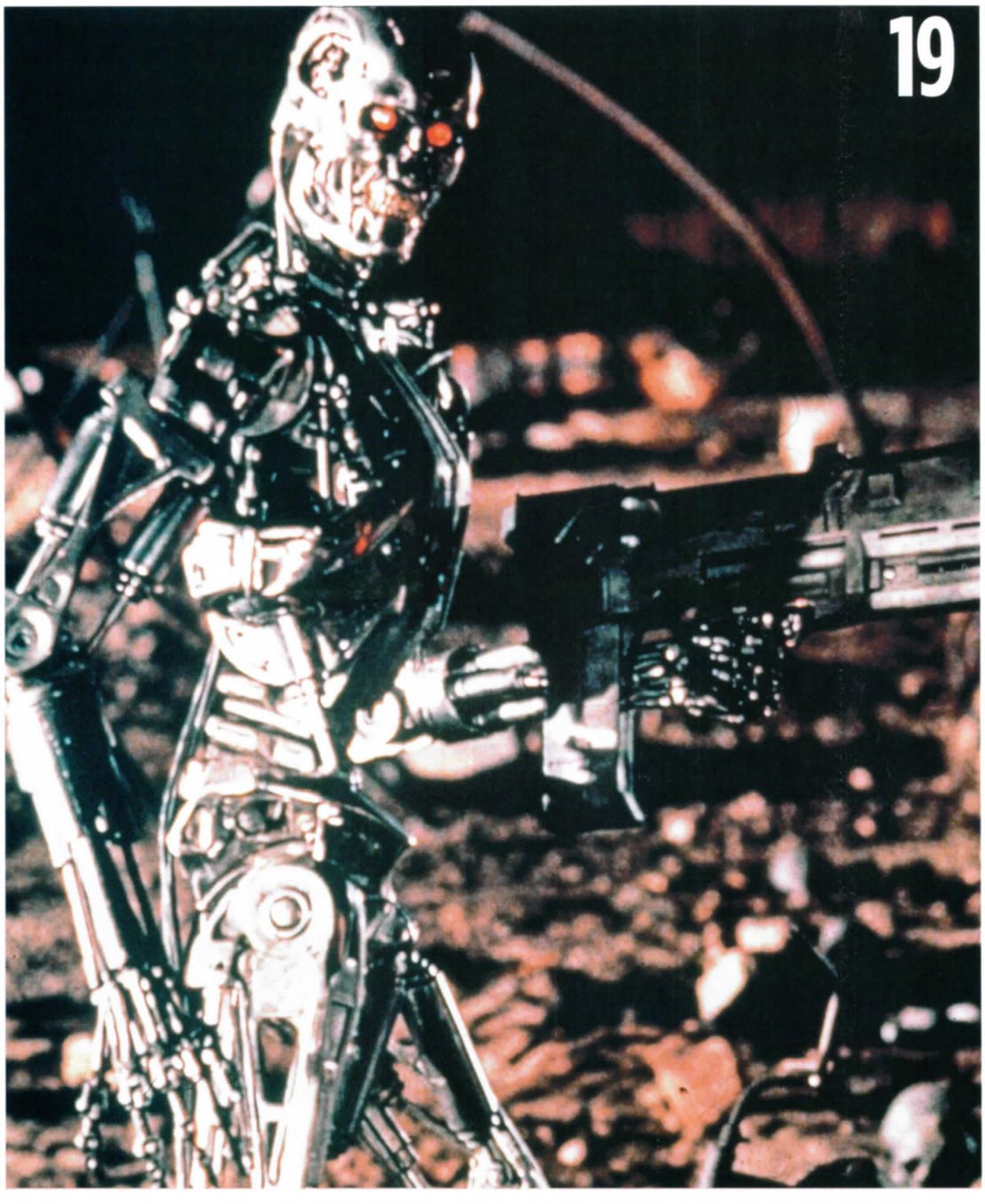
Why?
With his series of novels broadly known as *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy* (a trilogy in four parts, then five parts...), Cambridge-educated Adams gave us some of the most fiercely imaginative *and* hilarious stories. Plastering a broad grin across science fiction's often straight face, *Hitchhiker's* went on to infect all manner of other media, including radio, TV and finally film in 2005. The man's one-off creativity led to a very definable era of *Doctor Who*, when he script-edited season 17. Not only did his good humour compliment Tom Baker's eccentricities as the Fourth Doctor, but Adams wrote "City Of Death", widely regarded to be the *Who* story that should be shown to an inquisitive visiting alien.

Finest Moment:
The Hitchhiker's Guide's revelation that the "answer to the ultimate question of life, the universe and everything" is – drum roll, please – 42.

Quote:
"I love deadlines. I love the whooshing noise they make as they go by." – Oh yes, script editors *loved* Douglas.

Did you know?
Adams was a big Pink Floyd fan. He helped name their 1994 album *The Division Bell* and played rhythm guitar with them on his 42nd birthday (a gift from the band's guitarist David Gilmour).





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19 James Cameron

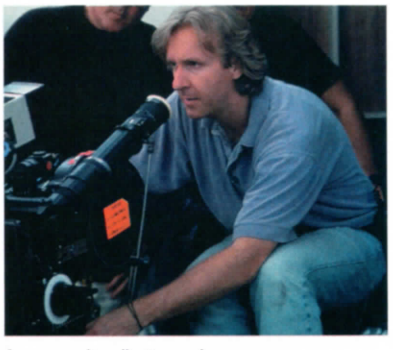
(1954–present) WHO? Maker of Big Movies.

Why?
It's doubtful that the notoriously demanding Canadian could ever make a movie about, say, the goings-on in a small, close-knit community. Everything he does is on a huge scale, and this approach has given us some of the most spectacular movies ever. In the '80s, he was Action Man, bringing us *The Terminator* (1984), screenwriting *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985) and ably following Ridley Scott's act by delivering *Aliens* (1986). In 1991, however, he blew all expectations away with *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* – the SF gem which pinned the magical expression "CGI" to the tongues of anyone interested in special effects, and effectively challenged any subsequent action movie to top it. Weirdly, no-one quite has.

Finest Moment:
Creating The Terminator, the one utterly classic character which Cameron can call his own.

Quote:
"People call me a perfectionist, but I'm not. I'm a rightist. I do something until it's right, and then I move on to the next thing." – Surely Jim isn't talking about his many wives here?

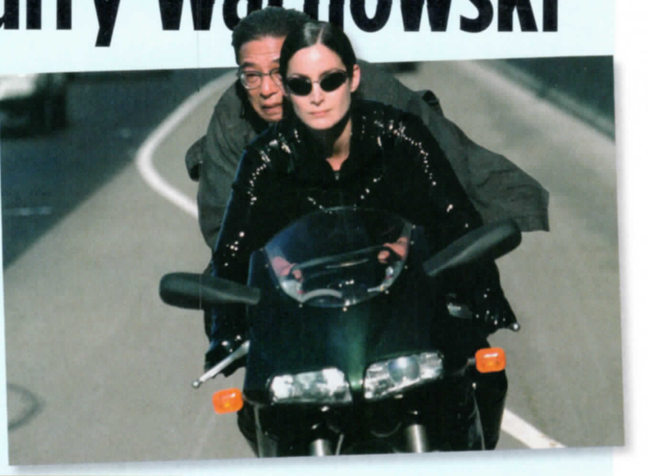
Did you know?
Cameron considers 1994's hard-hitting, pre-millennial *Strange Days* to be his finest screenplay.



Cameron: writer, director, producer...

18 Andy Wachowski & Larry Wachowski

Andy (1967–present) & Larry Wachowski (1965–present) WHO? Masters of The Matrix.



Why?
Manga animation. Kung fu movies. Science fiction. Just three of the elements which the Wachowski Brothers dumped into a huge blender in order to fashion 1999's *The Matrix*. It was special for many reasons. We hadn't seen the vast majority of its effects before – in particular, the disorientating "bullet time" motion – and it was way more philosophical than the average SF movie (even if we've since come to doubt that even the Wachowskis knew exactly what they were on about). It also revived the grand concept of the movie trilogy and, like the Wachowskis' previous films, featured strong female characters. The SF world had received an upgrade.

Finest Moment:
Perhaps the freeway chase in *The Matrix Reloaded*, which attained *T2*-esque levels of jaw-dropping action.

Quote:
"The brothers put so much time into every detail of the story that they are protective of this world they created. Now they have the power to control that world." – Keanu Reeves.

Did you know?
Years ago, the Wachowski brothers wrote a horror movie script called *Carnivore*, about yuppies being eaten alive in a creepy boarding house. Sadly, it remains unproduced.

Keanu auditions for *Simply Come Dancing*.

17 Osamu Tezuka

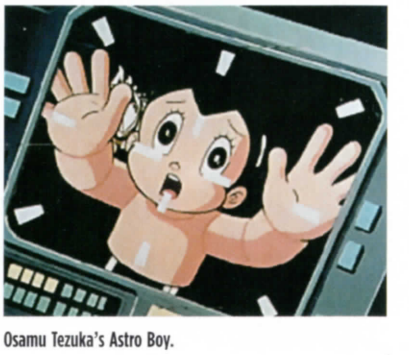
(1928–1989) WHY? Manga/anime pioneer.

Why?
It's a mark of Tezuka's importance in Japan that his death caused almost as much fuss as that of the country's emperor, two weeks earlier. He established the manga look in the early '60s, which was partly influenced by Walt Disney and Max Fleischer, in terms of the characters' distinctively big eyes. His debut comic book series remains his most famous: titled *Tetsuwan Atom*, it aired in America as *Astro Boy*. As would be the case with most of Tezuka's work, it was heavily edited to aim for more of a youth demographic. The story goes that Disney also appropriated ideas from his *Jungle Taitei* TV series (*Kimba The White Lion* in America) for their own blockbusting *The Lion King*. He may never have received due credit in the US, but manga fans know Tezuka was the man behind the magic.

Finest Moment:
Astro Boy, which is currently being made into a movie.

Quote:
"Love all the creatures! Love everything that has life! I have been trying to express this message in every one of my works." – Tezuka proves himself a stand-up guy.

Did you know?
Tezuka's contribution to manga comprises well over 80,000 pages. Ludicrous!



Osamu Tezuka's Astro Boy.

16 HR Giger

(1940–present) WHO? Alien designer.

Why?
Without Hans Rüdi Giger's brilliantly unique vision, the *Alien* film franchise might not have even begun. In 1977, writer and co-producer Dan O'Bannon commissioned him to develop imagery that might convince 20th Century Fox to take on the movie which became *Alien*. Giger's arresting combinations of flesh and mechanics won the suits over. The power of his work prompted a hitherto-unseen press interest in him as a designer and in 1980 won him an Oscar for Best Achievement in Visual Effects. Giger also designed randy extra-terrestrial Sil for *Species* (1995).

Finest Moment:
The way that his creature and sets in *Alien* look appropriately, well, alien.

Quote:
"At its essence, Giger's art digs down into our psyches and touches our very deepest primal instincts and fears. His work has always had a disturbing effect on me, as it has had on so many others" – Ridley Scott salutes the madman.

Did you know?
US punks The Dead Kennedys included a poster of sexually explicit Giger art with 1985's *Frankenchrist* album. It got singer Jello Biafra arrested.

Giger's vision...

15 Sydney Newman

(1917–1997) WHO? Creator of *Doctor Who* and *The Avengers*.

Why?
Of all the influential types listed here, Sydney Newman was possibly the least aware of what he was starting. A Canadian transplanted to London in 1954, he devised *The Avengers* for ABC, before winding up at the BBC as the Head Of Drama. Ironically, seeing as he had become synonymous with realistic "kitchen sink" drama, he decided to fill a vacant Saturday early evening slot with an SF serial. Stressing the show's historical and educational aspects, he hired producer Verity Lambert and script editor David Whittaker. Forty-two years after its 1963 birth, *Doctor Who* refuses to die, despite having mutated way beyond Mr Newman's criteria.

Finest Moment:
His outline mentioning, "a time-space machine with contemporary characters who would be able to travel forward and backward in time, and inward and outward in space." Nice one, Syd.

Quote:
"How dare you? Bug-eyed monsters are cheap science fiction." – Newman to Verity Lambert, upon learning of the Daleks' appearance on *Doctor Who*.

Did you know?
"Sydney" appeared as a character in Big Finish's postmodern 2003 audio play, *Doctor Who Unbound: Deadline*.

14 Joss Whedon

(1964–present)
WHO? Inventor of *Buffy, Angel, Firefly*, etc.

Why?
Setting up shop in 1997, *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* was the show which hammered home the notion of character development in TV serials, having been inspired by the "accumulative knowledge", as Whedon puts it, of continuity-observing shows like 1990's *Twin Peaks*. It was also wildly unpredictable in a way that most other shows couldn't dream of. Whedon's unusually-wired brain gave rise to innovation after innovation, such as the silence-dominated (and nightmare-inducing) episode "Hush" and the musical instalment "Once More With Feeling". *Angel* then demonstrated that you don't have to be *Frasier* to survive as a spin-off character. For five seasons, at least...

Finest Moment:
Turning horror movies' "helpless dumb blonde" convention on its head with *Buffy*.

Quote:
"With everything that I do, I hope that they see people struggling to live decent, moral lives in a completely chaotic world. They see how hard it is, how often they fail, and how they get up and keep trying. That, to me, is the most important message I'm ever going to tell." – Awwww, bless him.

Did you know?
His father and grandfather both wrote for TV: the latter labouring on the splendidly-named *Leave It To Beaver*, for instance.

13 Stanley Kubrick

(1928–1999) WHO? Cinema's Mr Perfection.

Why?
The New York-born Kubrick made movies for 18 years before collaborating on 1968's *2001: A Space Odyssey* with Arthur C Clarke. A visually and conceptually sumptuous epic, it's seen by many as the definitive SF classic. Equally, his 1980 adaptation of Stephen King's *The Shining* is generally considered one of the most trouser-bothering fright flicks ever. While his *A Clockwork Orange* defies categorisation, it has proved equally iconic – and controversial. Thankfully, Kubrick's mighty influence hasn't extended to directors asking for their own films to be banned, as he did with *Clockwork Orange* after its cinema release.

Finest Moment:
The celebrated jump-cut in *2001...*, switching from a bone thrown into the air by prehistoric man to a spaceship. Millions of years traversed in a split-second.

Quote:
"Kubrick ... made cinematic SF respectable and respected again" – John Walker, editor of *Halliwell's Film Guide*.

Did you know?
Kubrick conceived of the "steadicam" for *The Shining*. Invented to produce a smooth tracking shot, it has become a standard director's tool.

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12 JRR Tolkien

(1892–1973) WHO? Architect of Middle-earth.

Why?
He's the man who pumped so much life into the fantasy genre and role-playing games. Middle-earth wasn't just the mind-bogglingly large, wonderfully vivid playground for his characters in books like *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord Of The Rings* (1954-55), but the template for countless fictional worlds to follow. It brought about the practice of world-building among fantasy writers, plus the prospect of spreading stories over several tomes in order to do these huge constructs full justice (even though Tolkien intended *LOTR* to be one big volume). A man with a brain the size of Mount Doom, he gained various scholarly plaudits and became an Oxford professor.

Finest Moment:
Finishing *Lord Of The Rings* after 14 years. And you thought Peter Jackson had it bad...

Quote:
"It's a job that's never started that takes the longest to finish." – Mr Work Ethic speaks.

Did you know?
Tim Rice-Oxley from Keane's gran was taught by Tolkien and CS Lewis. She reported: "Yes, Tolkien was a rather good-looking man. Unlike CS Lewis."

11

Philip K Dick

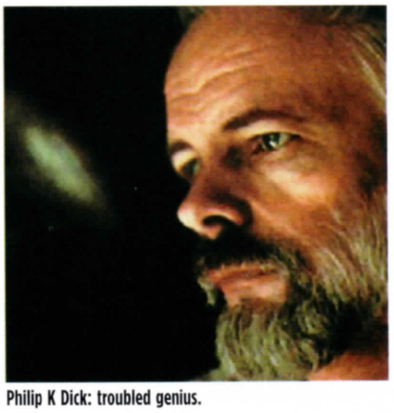
(1928–1982) WHO? Visionary ideas man.

Why?
Like a few other writers born in the first half of the 20th century, Philip Kindred Dick's work was only seized upon by Hollywood when he was preparing to leave this mortal coil. Now he's remembered as the brilliantly erratic drug-dabbler who inspired 1982's *Blade Runner* and thus cyberpunk (with his 1968 novel *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?*), 1990's *Total Recall* (his 1966 short story "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale") and 2002's *Minority Report* (his 1956 short story "The Minority Report"). The latter's director, Steven Spielberg, told *SFX* that Dick was "one of the great futurists of all time." We didn't argue.

Finest Moment:
Writing *Do Androids Dream...* even if *Blade Runner* director Ridley Scott *did* cruelly excise the book's titular Electric Sheep from the movie.

Quote:
"Science fiction writers... really do not know anything. We can't talk about science, because our knowledge of it is limited and unofficial, and usually our fiction is dreadful." – the oft-troubled Dick fishes for compliments.

Did you know?
In 1974, the writer insisted he had been visited by God. Or, he admitted, he might be schizophrenic.



Philip K Dick: troubled genius.

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10 Tim Burton

(1958–present) WHO? Cinema's Prince Of Darkness.

Why?
A quite sickeningly talented individual, the former Disney animator first raised movie-going eyebrows by directing the eccentric *Beetlejuice* (1988) and being handed the reins to direct the extremely expensive big-screen comeback of *Batman* (1989). While it ended up reflecting less of his own personality than he might have liked, he got the chance to let it all hang out with *Batman Returns* (1992): a movie which showed us his dark, quirky, living-animation style in all its glory, as had 1990's touching Johnny Depp fantasy *Edward Scissorhands*.

It was with 1993's gorgeously animated *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, however, that Burton really forged his very own cult universe. The following year's *Ed Wood* was another cult picture, loved by critics but slow to catch on – as was his wacky alien invasion movie *Mars Attacks!* in 1996. Burton retreated into his uniquely gothic world with *Sleepy Hollow* (1999), again with Depp, before remaking *Planet Of The Apes* in 2001 and the very personal *Big Fish* in 2003. His next release is a remake of *Charlie & The Chocolate Factory* – material with which we trust him implicitly.

Finest Moment:
Bringing Jack Skellington into existence. The pumpkin-headed hero has since become a real poster-boy for the cheerfully macabre set.

Quote:
"Maybe I just confused [Hollywood] so much that they have just given me some money to go away - I don't know! But I've been lucky."

Did you know?
Burton toiled on *The Nightmare Before Christmas* for years on end. Jack Skellington's face was previewed at the end of *Beetlejuice*, atop a merry-go-round on the eponymous character's head.

Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas*.

Cinematic perfection: *Edward Scissorhands*.

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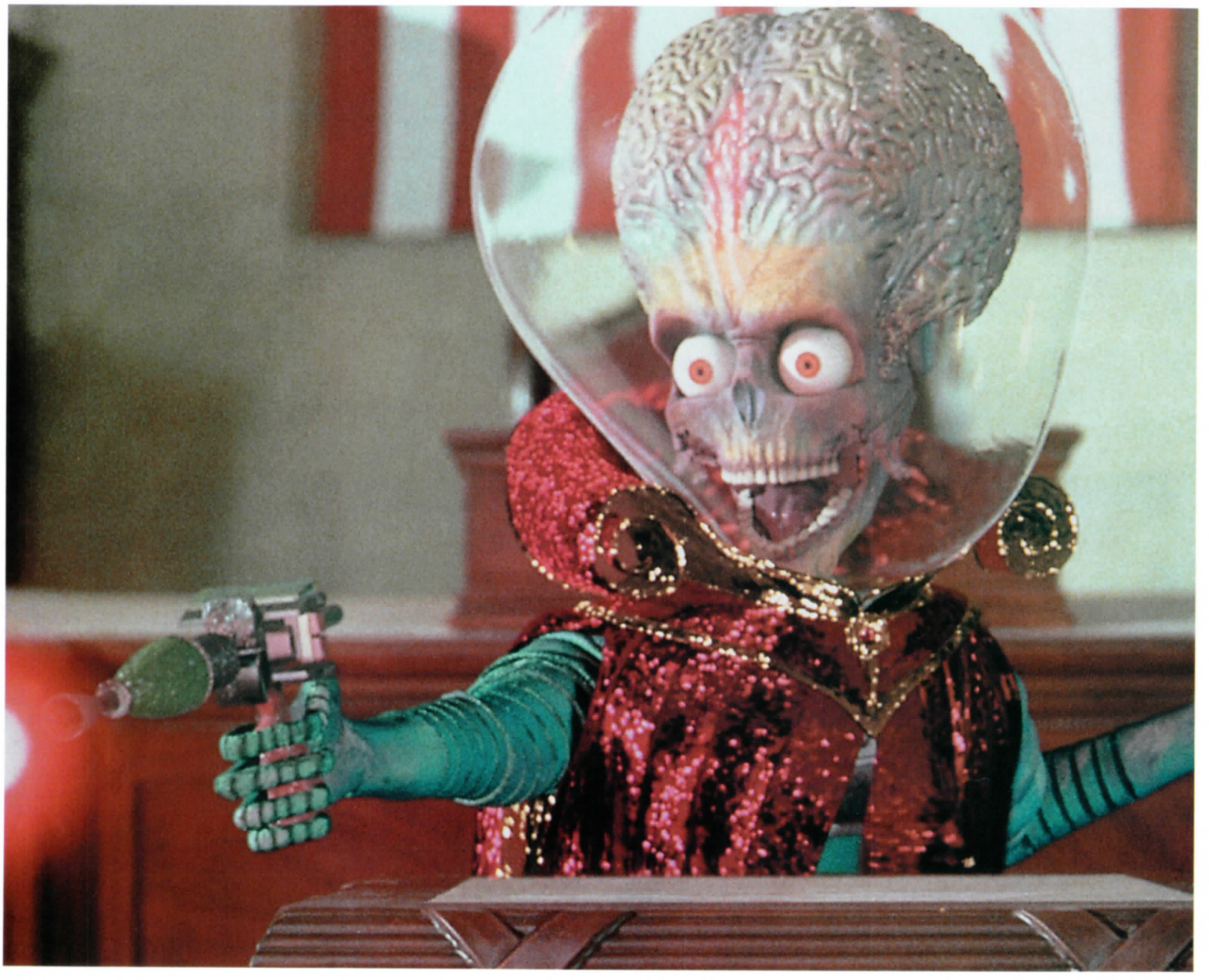


9 Gerry Anderson

(1929–present) WHO? Master Of Puppets.

Why?
"Supermarionation" was the hook on which the London-born entrepreneur would hang his hat for decades to come. He had already spent time in the film and TV industries before inventing this new form of puppetry, but the moment Lew Grade gave him money to create a TV series called *Supercar*, Anderson's future was set in stone.

Anderson made animated puppets a more-than-viable entertainment form, generally placing them in futuristic scenarios and cool modes of transport which snared the imagination of young viewers. *Fireball XL5*, *Stingray* and *Thunderbirds* each saw him upping the ante, in terms of both ambition and success. Another key series was *Captain Scarlet And The Mysterons*, which saw Anderson making the proportions of his puppets more realistic.

In the early '70s, Anderson branched into live action SF shows with *UFO* (1970-1971) and *Space: 1999* (1975-1977). In the '80s he returned to marionette mayhem with *Terrahawks*, then in the '90s brought us the live action *Space Precinct*. Having disowned last year's *Thunderbirds* movie remake flop, he is currently working on a new series for his Captain Scarlet character, updating his own trademark process as Hypermarionation, which involves CGI.

Finest Moment:
Creating the Thunderbirds themselves: the reason most kids got up early to watch the show.

Quote:
"I wasn't proud of the puppet films when they first came out. But all these years later people have come up to me and said things like, 'Thank you for what happiness you brought me as a child.' Then I slowly learned to respect my own product."

Did you know?
Anderson has worked in commercials, for Tennants Lager and the Bank of Scotland among other products. "One advantage of making commercials," he has noted, "is it makes you realise how nice it is *not* to make commercials."

Hmm, where are the strings?

8 Terry Nation

(1930–1997) WHO? Principal creator of the Daleks.

Why?
Regardless of whether Raymond P Cusick designed the homicidal pepper-pots, only to be robbed of credit and revenue, BBC scripter Terry Nation had the initial idea for them. For giving us a universally-recognised figure of fear, complete with an ideological allusion to Hitler's Nazis – a comparison which Nation would eventually spell out with zero subtlety by scripting 1975's "Genesis Of The Daleks" – we are eternally grateful.

The Daleks were to prove massively important, beyond their obvious brilliance, as they arguably provided *Doctor Who* with a life-raft during the '60s: their regular appearances kept the show afloat until it was big enough to stand on its own two feet. The mutant death-dealers had become a pop-culture icon: everyone wanted their own clockwork toy or annual. They still do, and these days you can remotely steer one around your living room floor.

Proving he was much more than a one-trick pony, Nation went on to devise a whole BBC series of his own in *Blake's 7* (1978 – 1981). Popped from the *Star Trek* mould, with an added dash of political intrigue, it perhaps held little influence on shows that followed but brightened many a childhood and is recalled via rose-tinted memories.

Finest Moment:
The uproar caused last year when it was announced that – shock, horror – the Daleks *wouldn't* be appearing in the revitalised *Doctor Who*. Of course, we now know they're back, bling and all.

Quote:
"I was, for that short time, the most famous writer on television... There was stuff coming to my house saying, 'Dalek Man, London'."

Did you know?
Nation was very protective of his creations. He refused, for instance, to let Skaro's sons to appear in battle with the Doctor's robot dog K-9.

Nation's creations: *Blake's 7* (above) and the Daleks.

7 Chris Carter

(1956–present) WHO? Keeper of *The X-Files*.

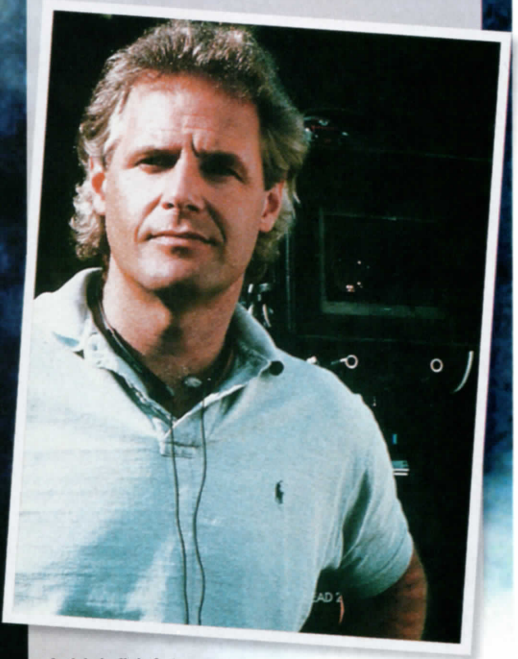
Why?
The superbly-mulleted Californian started his career as a journalist for the San Clemente, California magazine *Surfing*. He then edited it for a while and worked for Disney as a TV movie screenwriter in the mid-to-late '80s. In 1992, he developed projects for Twentieth Century Fox Television. Cue *The X-Files* the following year: an edgy TV series which stunned the world with its innovative blend of SF, horror and FBI procedural/political intrigue. *The X-Files* established that audiences wouldn't necessarily switch off just because all the required information wasn't delivered to them on a plate, every week. Or indeed if it was *never* delivered, in the case of many of the show's increasingly tangled ongoing mysteries and conspiracy theories. Yet *The X-Files*' mystique has contributed greatly to its massive cult appeal.

Carter stayed roughly within genre with his next projects, the serial killer series *Millennium* (1996 – 1999), the swiftly aborted virtual reality show *Harsh Realm* (1999) and the *X-Files* spin-off *The Lone Gunmen* (2001). All three nose-dived, but Carter's place in this list was already assured years beforehand.

Finest Moment:
The mood-setting mystery of *The X-Files* title sequence, which seemed to usher in a whole new era.

Quote:
"I was never a SF fan. I spoke to a group once and they were shocked that I'd never seen *Star Trek*." – Sadly, neither has Carter ever seen a set of clippers.

Did you know?
Carter's influence for *The X-Files* came partly from watching the early '70s TV series *Kolchak: The Night Stalker*. He tried to make his own show equally as frightening for the viewer.



Surf dude Chris Carter.

6 Ed Catmull & Steve Jobs

Ed Catmull (1946–present) and Steve Jobs (1955–present) WHO? The men behind Pixar.

Why?
Catmull and Jobs formed Pixar in 1985, when the latter bought the computer graphics division of George Lucas's Lucasfilm company for $10 million. Working with former Disney and Lucasfilm animator John Lasseter, they set their sights on making animated features, while paying the bills by designing a succession of corporate logos and adverts.

Ten years after Pixar's inception, the company struck gold with *Toy Story*, the world's first fully computer-animated feature film. Distributed by Disney, with whom Pixar had struck up a partnership, it was the film which launched countless Buzz Lightyear dolls and redefined what animation could achieve, as well as introducing us to its sharp brand of humour. Pixar's reign continued with *A Bug's Life* (1998), the inevitable *Toy Story 2* (1999), *Monsters Inc* (2001) and *Finding Nemo* (2003). It then took a leap and a bound in 2004 with *The Incredibles*, which shifted the boundaries of adult content in mainstream animation like nothing else since *The Simpsons*. Parents were grateful indeed.

Finest Moment:
Giving birth in *Toy Story* to a pop culture catchphrase with Buzz Lightyear's "To infinity and beyond!"

Quote:
"You would be hard pressed to find anyone who loves the original spirit of Disney more than John Lasseter, Ed Catmull or myself. But... it's time to move on." – Steve Jobs on the Pixar/Disney break-up, announced in 2004.

Did you know?
Steve Jobs co-founded Apple Computer, Inc in 1977. He returned to the company in 1997 and continues to exert influence.

5 Stan Lee

(1922–present) WHO? Comic book mogul.

Why?
The original Stan The Man, Lee has quite simply exerted more influence over the comic book industry than anyone else. In all, Lee has been involved with the invention of 90 per cent of Marvel Comics' main characters. His co-creations speak for themselves: The Incredible Hulk, X-Men, The Fantastic Four, Daredevil, Silver Surfer and Dr Strange.

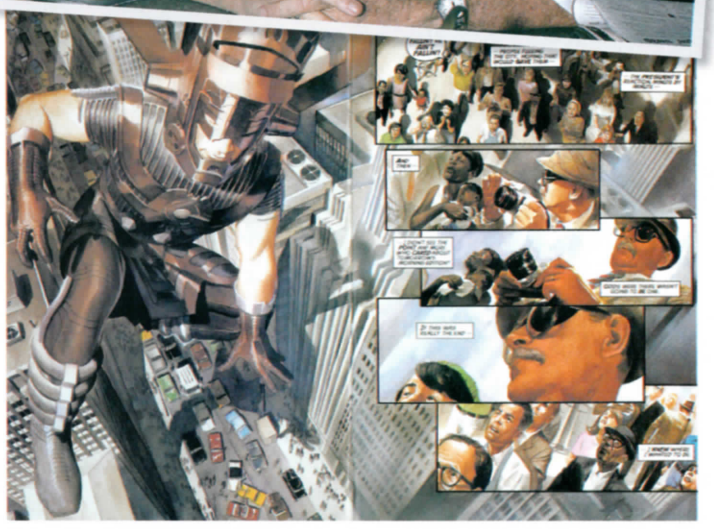
Oh, and Spider-Man. Initially hated by Marvel publisher Martin Goodman, Spidey made his inauspicious debut in the final, 15th issue of *Amazing Fantasy* in August 1962. When that comic, which had Spider-Man on the cover, vacated shelves at a remarkable rate, Goodman miraculously changed his mind about people hating spiders. Spider-Man's own Marvel comic landed on the racks the following March. The character's arrival was important in many ways: it established a trend for examining the superhero's psyche in great detail, giving the "normal" alter ego a fully-formed character, rather than a vague day-job. The webslinger was also perhaps the first superhero to whom a teenager could directly relate.

In the '70s and '80s, Lee's creations snowballed through almost every medium. Today, his characters appear in 24 different active TV shows around the world. Come the new millennium, of course, director Sam Raimi made Spider-Man even bigger by swinging him into a new blockbuster movie franchise. Excelsior!

Finest Moment:
The day he casually thought it might be cool to have a superhero who could stick to walls and ceilings. Fortuitously, Lee resisted his initial ideas for the name. Fly-Man, for instance.

Quote:
"Years ago, when I first wrote these characters, I didn't dream that anything like this would happen. I just hoped that the books would sell and I'd be able to keep my job." – two billion comic books later, Stan feels more secure.

Did you know?
Lee originally asked Jack Kirby to draw a prototype Spider-Man. But when Kirby's style didn't ring Lee's bell, he commissioned the more stylised Steve Ditko to do the honours.



The man himself (top) and a few of his creations...

4 Steven Spielberg

(1946–present) WHO? Maker of iconic movies.

Why?
The list of Steven Allan Spielberg's achievements is almost as long as Schindler's. One of Hollywood's foremost power figures, he has been responsible for landmark after cinematic landmark. Even his early directing gig, *Duel* (1971), showed that he had something special. But it was 1975's *Jaws* which nail-gunned his name to the cinematic map, setting new records for screams and generally pant-soiling behaviour among packed houses.

Spielberg stomped into SF territory in 1977 with *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*. A giant of a movie, it strongly influenced the way in which the whole world visualised extra-terrestrial life-forms, right down to the strawberry-shaped head and emaciated body. This model would be followed for decades: even a groundbreaking show like *The X-Files* was informed by it. Then 1981's *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* gave the world Indiana Jones and a new thirst for boy's own adventure.

In 1982, the same year that John Carpenter's hostile alien *The Thing* received an equally hostile reception, Spielberg came out with a cute alien picture in *ET: The Extra-Terrestrial* which stormed the globe. As if that wasn't enough to bestow upon popular culture, he went on to produce the pace-setting likes of *Gremlins* (1984), *Back To The Future* (1985) and *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (1988).

In the '90s, Spielberg became known for saccharine schmaltz, as tasted in the otherwise impressive *Artifical Intelligence: AI* (2001). Still, the following year saw him embrace darkness once again with the excellent Tom Cruise actioner *Minority Report*, based on a Philip K Dick story. The man's still got it...

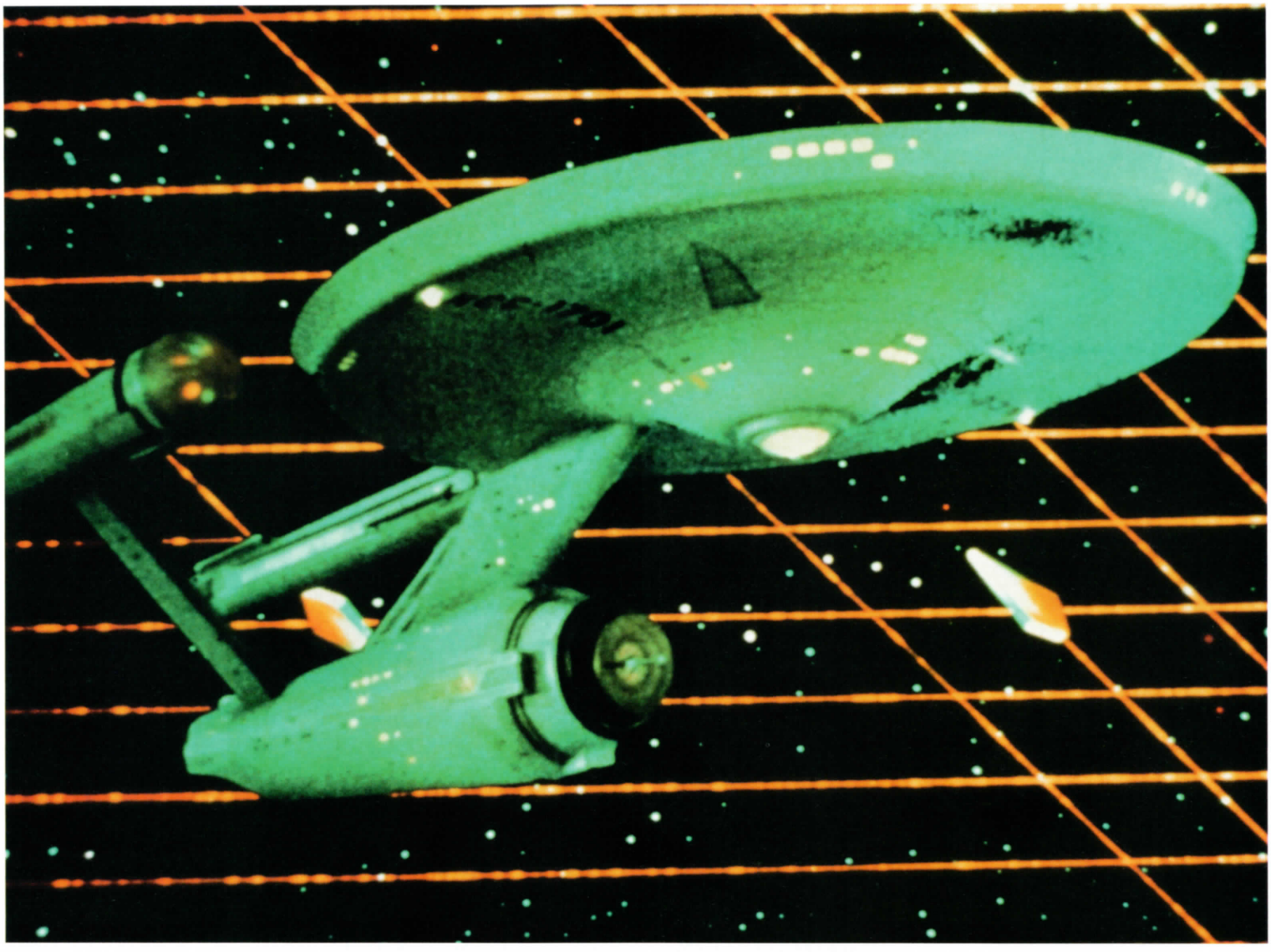
Finest Moment:
The close encounter at the end of, uh, *Close Encounters*. Epic and breath-taking, it forever embeds a series of musical notes into your brain.

Quote:
"I dream for a living" – Steven's being modest here. Surely he must be awake *sometimes*...

Did you know?
Spielberg is a great advert for Asperger Syndrome, from which he suffers. Similar to autism, it can affect social skills and makes the sufferer see the world in a different way to others.

Spielberg magic, *ET*-style.

Close Encounters: yup, we ain't alone...



3 Gene Roddenberry

(1921–1991) WHO? Creator of *Star Trek*.

Why?
Until *Star Trek* beamed itself down in 1966, the world's experience of SF TV serials had been restricted to a few years of monochrome *Doctor Who* and *Lost In Space*, the light and frothy romp which had started the previous year. Roddenberry showed that science fiction could be successfully dramatic and serious-minded on the small screen. Accordingly, he was very studious about *Star Trek*'s genesis, going so far as to have meetings with NASA, in an attempt to make his unreal scenario seem as real as possible.

The extent of *Star Trek*'s influence is shown not only by its own continuing franchise and a host of enduring household catchphrases, but by the existence of shows like *Babylon 5* and *Blake's 7*. *Trek* proved seminal for its colourfully imaginative visuals and exciting adventures, but on a (slightly) more subtle level for its weaving of issues into those weekly plots. Kids were converted to the Trekkie cause *en masse*, weaned on messages about the power of technology, the evils of racism, the beauty of friendship, how drug use could mess you up... to a certain extent, it could be said to have raised a whole generation to be accepting and tolerant, just like the Federation.

Apart from when it came to that evil marijuana stuff.

Finest Moment:
William Shatner's opening *Trek* speech, boldly going where no monologue had gone before.

Quote:
"Gene changed the course of everyday life in the cast, and he's also changed the lives of God-knows-how-many thousands of other people who view what he's done. I think that will continue to happen for some time to come" – DeForest Kelley makes no bones about it. Ouch.

Did you know?
Roddenberry can't take all the credit for inventing Mr Spock. The show's writer Sam Peeples helped shape the original idea of Spock being a red devil-like character, complete with tail.

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2 HG Wells

(1866–1946) WHO? The father of Big SF Ideas.

Why?
"Herbert may have a few important facts wrong," said Tom Baker's Doctor in 1977's "Horror Of Fang Rock", "but his basic supposition is sound enough." It's only natural that *Doctor Who* felt obliged to namecheck Herbert George Wells on occasion: the TARDIS owed him a massive debt. His first novel in 1895 was, after all, *The Time Machine*, which would also influence so much other fiction, including the *Back To The Future* movies of the 1980s. Admittedly, *Doctor Who* could have picked a better story than season 22's dire "Timelash" in which to include Wells as an actual character.

Before the 19th Century was out, the author had delivered yet more SF concepts which would shape the way the genre thought and acted, probably forever. 1896 saw *The Island Of Dr Moreau*, which would merit two movie adaptations in the century to follow. Then came *The Invisible Man* the following year: an even bigger goldmine for movie adaptations, from James Whale's 1933 version, through John Carpenter's *Memoirs Of An Invisible Man* (1992) with Chevy Chase, to Paul Verhoeven's *Hollow Man* in 2000.

In 1898, however, Wells published *The War Of The Worlds*, perhaps the single most influential SF novel ever. If the idea of aliens invading the Earth had been considered before, it certainly hadn't been delivered with this kind of quality. Without *The War Of The Worlds*, there would have assuredly been no *The Day The Earth Stood Still* (1951), *Mars Attacks!* (1996), *Independence Day* (1996) or countless others. Wells continued to write for another 40 years, but his most important work had been done.

Finest Moment:
30 October, 1938, when an American public heard the radio broadcast of *War Of The Worlds* and thought an alien invasion was happening for real. A testament to Wells's writing, if ever there was one.

Quote:
"Every time I see an adult on a bicycle, I no longer despair for the future of the human race" – we're not quite sure what you meant, Herb, but we're sure that it was dreadfully clever.

Did you know?
Due to his anti-Hitler scribblings, Wells was reportedly on a list of intellectuals and politicians set to be executed if the Nazis took control of Britain. The fact that he actually died peacefully in his home was patently one in the eye for the Hun.

Not Tom Cruise.

1 George Lucas

(1944–present) WHO? The Big Kahuna.

Why?
SF's most influential person originally wanted to be a race car driver. As fate would have it, Lucas was in a car crash shortly after graduating high school. Understandably, this put him off race cars. While recovering in hospital, he reportedly dreamt up the concept of The Force, which would come in handy when he came to make *Star Wars* (1977), a space opera influenced by the old black 'n' white 1930s serials starring Buster Crabbe as the interchangeable Flash Gordon or Buck Rogers.

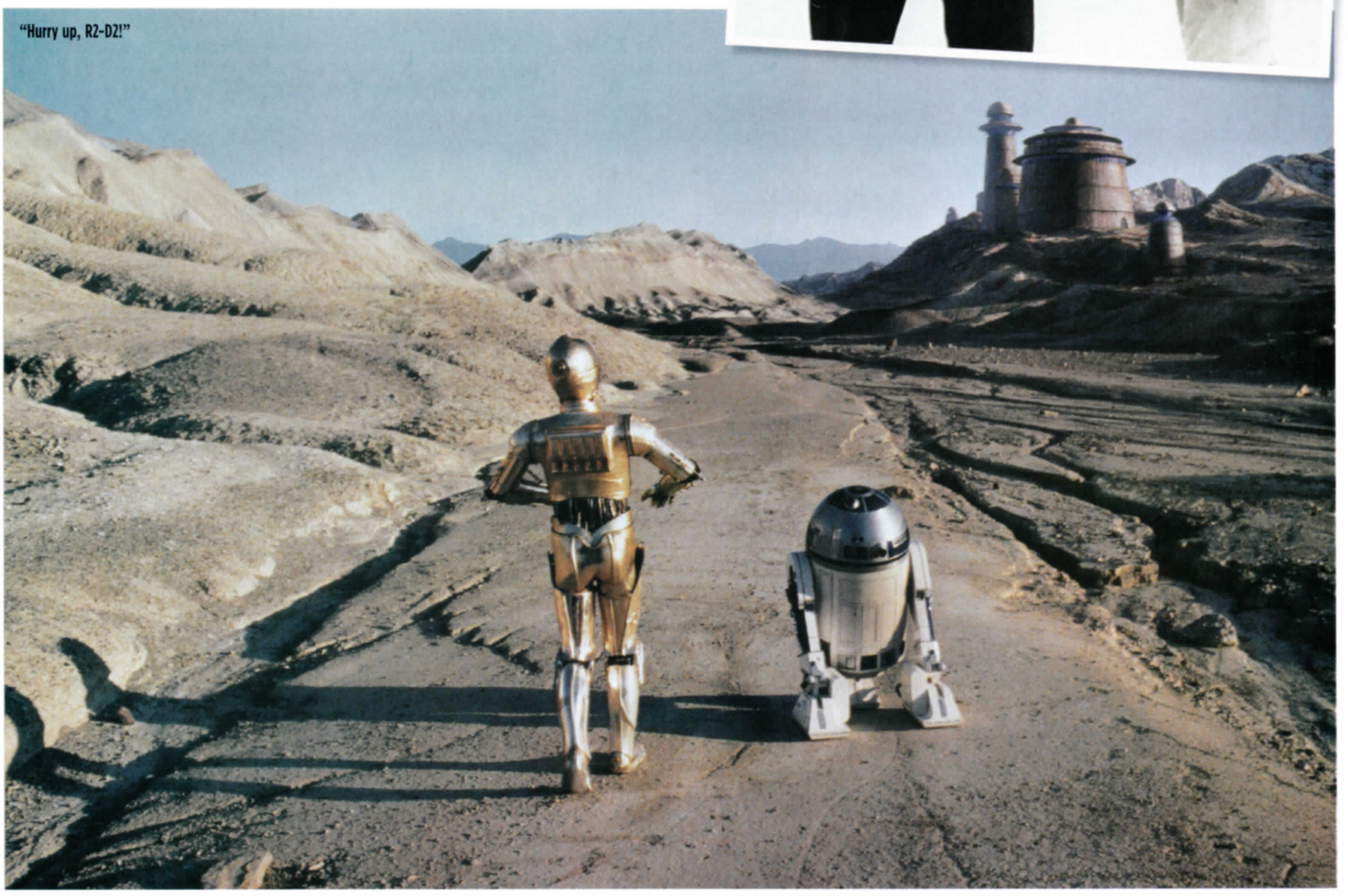
Despite its script having been turned down by most film studios befoer being taken up by 20th Century Fox, who considered it a risk, *Star Wars* was massive. It was responsible for a worldwide wave of interest in SF, which hasn't settled to this day. Marketing-wise, it was a dream, establishing exactly how powerful film merchandising could be. In film-making terms, it was brilliantly epic, but was compatible with kids and popcorn in the way which Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* simply hadn't been, a decade earlier. It also used an unusual degree of sound and music to help tell its tale: Lucas has stated that he considers these two considerations to be "50 % of the entertainment in a movie". To this end, he pioneered the powerful THX sound for movie theatres and later DVD. Also important to Lucas were special effects. To this end, he created Industrial Light & Magic, who became a highly influential company, handling imagery for the *Jurassic Park* and *Star Trek* movies, to name but two, and dominating the CGI market.

During the '80s, Lucas's remarkable Midas touch helped birth Indiana Jones. By then, two sequels to *Star Wars* had completed cinema's first blockbuster trilogy: some fans would say that Lucas should have stopped there. Whether that's true or not, George Lucas's personal billions say that he is the most powerful man who ever graced our genre.

Finest Moment:
Star Wars' battle between Darth Vader and Obi-Wan Kenobi. Just how cool are lightsabers?!

Quote:
"A special effect is a tool, a means of telling a story. A special effect without a story is a pretty boring thing" – Mind you, George, we don't much fancy a story without effects either.

Did you know?
Lucas apparently visited a hospital during the filming of *Star Wars*, suffering from hypertension. See? Even geniuses get the jitters.



"Hurry up, R2-D2!"

THE TOP 50 GREATEST SF PIONEERS

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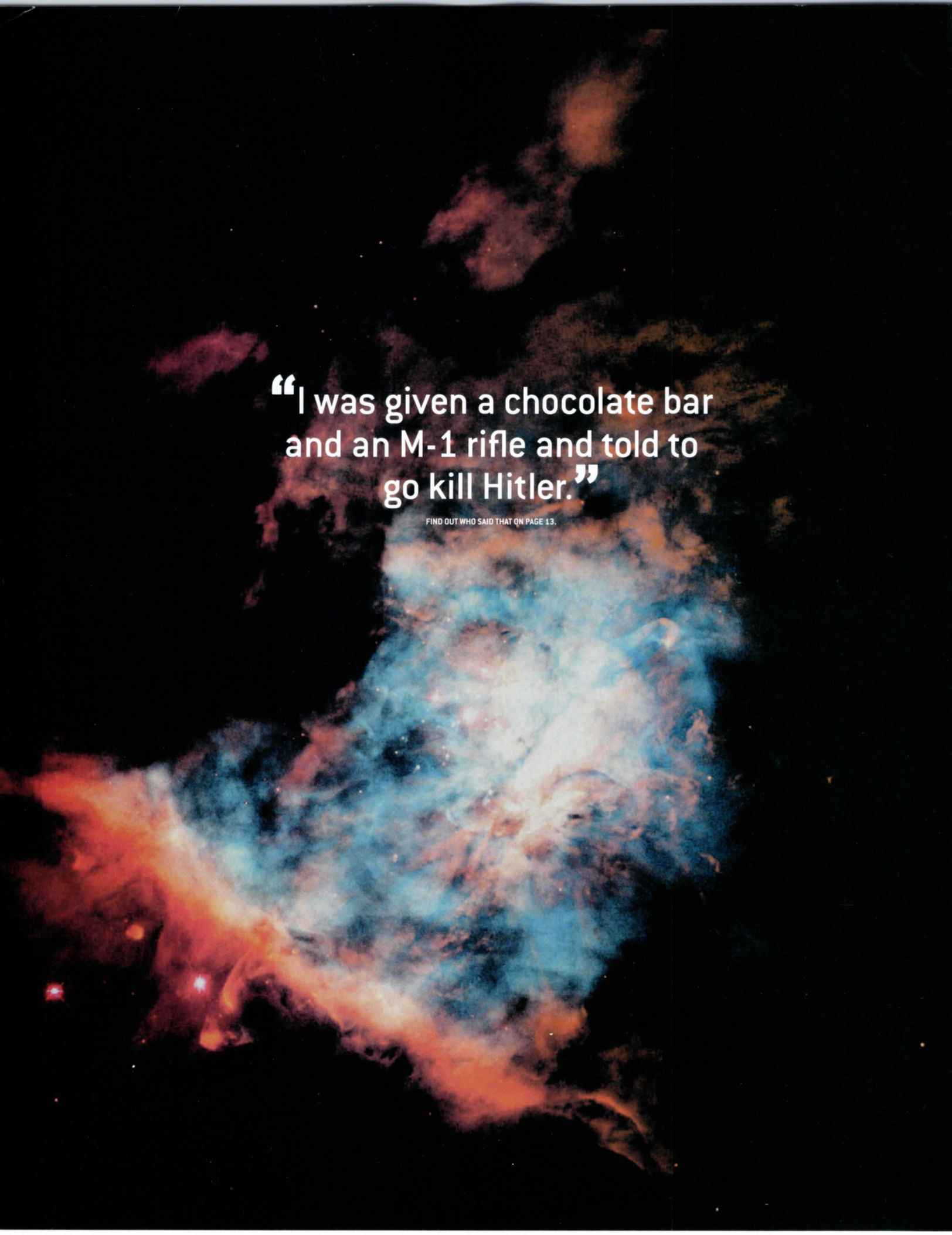
"I was given a chocolate bar
and an M-1 rifle and told to
go kill Hitler."
FIND OUT WHO SAID THAT ON PAGE 13.